



The QM Observer

Autumn Term Newsletter

Wednesday 20th December 2017

The QMGS Community Excels at Home & Abroad



Borneo Expedition

Rohan Dodhia reports: Over the summer, thirty students, accompanied by four staff, went on a once in a lifetime expedition to Borneo. Having arrived and acclimatised to the tropical climate, the two teams began the stages of the expedition. The project stage allowed us to gain a real insight into the lives of a rural village in Borneo, and many of us found this the most fulfilling part of the trip, as both teams made a physical difference in the building of an extension to the village church. Despite the vast differences in lives between us and the local children, they were so welcoming and energetic. Climbing Mount Kinabalu presented everyone with a physical challenge, but was also a very rewarding experience. Other stages included spending time at a nature lodge, visiting the Orang-utan and Sun Bear Sanctuaries, a jungle camp and finally snorkelling on one of the TAR islands. This provided an enjoyable ending to what had been an amazing trip, and we'd like to thank the staff for taking the time to organise and facilitate this brilliant experience.

Speakers' Award



Pavandeep Josan recalls: On 13 October 2017, QM's local MP, Valerie Vaz, paid the school a visit, in order to present a plaque on behalf of the Speaker of the House of Commons. This was in recognition of the school's second place finish in a national competition, open to every school in the country, called the Speaker's School Council Awards. The School Council Awards is a competition in which school councils from the entire country institute a community outreach and activism project in order to effect a positive change in the local community. In the case of Queen Mary's, the school council instituted a project called 'Change Your Mind', where local primary schools were visited and sessions were delivered to their Year 6 students in order to raise awareness of the all too important but sadly much maligned topic of mental health awareness. The project was led by Pavandeep Josan, Jamaal Butt, Kian Cushman and Kodi Beveridge Smith alongside Mrs McPhee and Mr Bryars.

Progress 8 Scores

Mr Lax writes: It was with some trepidation that we awaited the GCSE results of 2017, as this was the first cohort to face the challenge of being tested with the new-style GCSEs in English and mathematics, alongside the legacy specifications for all other subjects. We need not have worried! A Progress 8 figure of +0.69 placed the school in the top 6% of all schools, nationally, for value-added performance from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4. This is an important measure of the Year 11 pupils' progress over time in their "Best 8" GCSE results.

It is classed as "significantly above" the national average (set at 0 every year), according to Fisher Family Trust data. Year 11 pupils' attitudes to learning have been excellent throughout their time at the school: they and all their teachers should be very proud of their efforts.

Cadets in Canada

Kodi-Beveridge Smith writes: Over the summer, Tom Burns and I had the fantastic opportunity of spending our six weeks in the home of adventurous training: Canada. Tom was on a different course to me, but personally I was in the Rocky Mountains and it was as beautiful as you might think it to be. Surrounded by dense, untouched woodland, encircled by lilac rivers and watched over by towering, snow topped peaks for pretty much the whole of the summer.

The event itself consisted of six different activities: walking, mountain biking, canoeing, glacier climbing and horse riding. Each one had a suitable level of challenge and an excellent level of fun. Two standouts would be canoeing; I spent the whole time utterly terrified convinced I would be going for an unwanted swim in the freezing water. Yet,



through the excellence of the instructors I completed the cycle and honestly it was one of my proudest achievements. Second was the immense amount of fun I had climbing a snow and ice capped glacier in

little more than a t-shirt and jumper.

It is safe to say the experience would have been nothing without the people there with me. No exaggeration present when I say the people I spent my time with still impact the life I'm living today. All this thanks to a 'little' CCF in Walsall.



Houses

CCF

Sophie Chatwin writes...

After a successful Senior Girls Futsul tournament last year, each House was hoping to improve on their previous results. There was a great turnout of spectators from all Houses cheering the players on. Gryphon were the overall winners (below right) for the second year running, after victories in all three of their matches, with Aragon close behind in second place.

The House rugby competitions have also started which are taking place during Games lessons. **Year 10 Rugby** - Thank you to Mr Collins and Mr Hawkins for overseeing and refereeing this competition on 6th November 2017. The results are as follows: 1st place - Petypher (8 pts)
2nd place - Darby (7 pts)
3rd place - Gryphon (5 pts)
4th place - Aragon (4pts)

Year 8 Rugby - Thank you to Mr Magee and Mr Mackenzie for overseeing and refereeing the matches on 16th November 2017. The results are as follows:

1st place - Darby (9pts)
2nd place - Gryphon (7pts)
3rd place - Petypher (5pts)
4th place - Aragon (3pts)



Sam Shackleton writes: Flight Sergeants Haider Ali and Aadam Khan, and Warrant Officer Sam Shackleton, all of Year 13, were extremely privileged to be accepted onto the Air Cadet Pilot Scheme scholarships. We had 12 hours of flying training up to solo standard, at Tayside Aviation, Dundee Airport. Over two weeks we flew daily, receiving a theoretical briefing before each flight. There is also an theory exam that must be sat before the end of the course, mirroring Private Pilot License exams and requiring a great deal of self study on air law, radio communication and technical details, bringing together many parts of the CCF training syllabus. Passing this allowed all of us to be awarded our 'wings', perceived to be the greatest achievement for an air cadet and a badge that will be worn with pride in recognition of our efforts.

DT

Speech Day

Harjeevan Singh writes... Recently, a group of passionate DT students from the upper school were fortunate enough to visit the iconic National Memorial Arboretum, located near Lichfield. This visit consisted of us laying a wreath of remembrance beside the cherry tree, planted for the old boys who perished in the World Wars. We then viewed multiple memorials and made use of our DT knowledge to see how and why designs were produced in such formats. I would like to say thank you to Mr Hughes for organising this wonderful trip. *Lower Sixth visiting the Memorial Arboretum earlier this year:*



On Thursday 19th October we celebrated the School's achievements during Speech Day. Our guest speakers (Professor Dylan Edwards and Ibrar Majid) gave thought-provoking seminars on a medical theme during the afternoon and inspirational evening addresses. The pupil SLT presented highlights from 2016-17, including sporting success, international travel, dramatic performance and mental health awareness. Lots of students collected their prizes for subject and extra-curricular achievements. For the Houses, Darby collected the 2016-2017 Overall Winners Trophy (pictured top right). Gryphon picked up two shields, one for winning the Competition and the second for winning the Community Awards. Aragon picked up the shield for winning the House points competition.



Music

Mr Langton writes: Monday 18th December saw the joint Christmas concert with QMHS at Walsall Town Hall. As with previous concerts, the quality of music making was very high. Mr Vause and Mrs Watson led the performances expertly and it was very clear how much the students enjoyed the experience. Harry Sharma opened proceedings in a duet with Tyla Cockayne from QMHS, which was followed by an entertaining string ensemble. The brass ensemble lifted the spirits further and then the joint orchestra played two excellent pieces. The joint choir sounded superb under the direction of Mrs Watson, with their two songs, which were followed by a choral group and a Year 8 soloist, both from QMHS. The joint choir re-grouped for two more numbers, before the joint orchestra saw out the evening with two rousing renditions. Mr Vause paid tribute in the programme to all instrumental teachers, Chris Booth the organist and all the musicians who have worked so hard this term.

Chess

Chemistry

Mrs Anderton: Though many of the boys who now play for the QMGS Chess Teams have not played competitive chess before, from our expanding membership of 197, 45 are registered for BJCL team competitions. The season so far has been admittedly mixed, with cancelled matches causing disruption, but of the eight we have played, three have been won. It is a matter of pride to us that we always put out a full team and there are never defaulted boards. Our play continues to improve as the annual inter-house chess competition, which has just entered the group stages, heats up. The knockout stages, played between the surviving players from Years 7-11 from each house, will begin at the end of January. Newcomers are welcome to the club which meets in Q1 at lunchtime Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and in S7 Thursday.

Dr Pilkington. Following a launch event at the Wellcome Genome Campus in Cambridge, QM pupils have been taking part in the Institute for Research in Schools' Genome Decoder's Project. In attempting to annotate the genome of the human whipworm, the goal is to discover treatments for an unmet medical need in developing countries. Making use of cutting edge computer software, the project is stretching sixth form pupils well beyond their A-level studies into the fields of genetics and molecular biology.

Marians at the Lords



Lewis Fraser: The English Speaking Union invited 18 students from QMGs to participate in a formal debate in the House of Lords Chamber on the topic of the future of Britain's foreign policy. A representative of the ESU selected 3 students; Harrison Worley, Pavandeep Josan (pictured above) and I were selected to give pre-prepared speeches in the order of the debate. On the day, we were given a brief tour of the House of Lords and given workshops that developed our skills in polemics and oratory. Contributions from Carr (6HB) Mukkapati (6HE) and Burley (11G) were also made during the debate, in the form of impromptu speeches to the floor. The experience of speaking in such a prestigious chamber was monumental, but all the QM speakers demonstrated calm, poise and clarity when speaking and were commended by both the audience and members of the ESU. Congratulations to all who took part and thank you to Mr Bradley and Mr Clay-Croome for making the trip possible.

Romeo and Juliet



Hannah Watts reports: From 9th-11th of November, the cast of Romeo and Juliet showcased their talent in three evening performances of their play. Students from across the Key Stages came together to produce an abridged 'Romeo and Juliet at Christmas', first performing to an enthusiastic audience of Year 10s, before the official shows began. The friendships formed and memories made throughout a year of rehearsals shone through in amazing performances, witnessed by three equally captivated evening audiences. Many thanks to director Mr Clay-Croome, members of Tech Crew and all the cast and creatives for helping to see this production through to its adieu.

Bar Mock Trial



Kian Cushman reports: The Bar Mock Trial commenced on Saturday 17th November and would prove to be an enjoyable and unforgettable experience. The day began with a talk from the leaders of the Citizenship Foundation, during which they expressed their gratitude to us for taking part. The day moved onto the first trial, in which Umar Raja and I prosecuted the case of R v Marshall and were able to secure guilty verdict. Meanwhile, Radelina Ancheva and Rohith Mukkapati were defending the case of R V Marshall. These experiences gave many the opportunity to experience a taste of their desired future career. The day quickly moved on from case to case, as we continued to deliver on weeks of meticulous preparation. The day was enjoyable and strengthened the legal passions of many. I would like to thank Mr Bryars and Mr Tabari, the lawyer who helped us in the preparation stages.

International Chinese Speaking Competition. Kunming, China

Kush Nathwani reports: From 13th-28th October 2017, seven Y11 pupils (pictured below) ventured to Kunming, China, to represent the UK in the 10th China Bridge International Chinese Speaking Competition. Over 705 pupils from more than 60 countries participated in total, and we were extremely proud of being able to represent our country.



Manchester Imperial War Museum

Dominic Hall reports: In mid-November, Year 9 went to the Manchester Imperial War Museum over two days. We were able to see what occurred between the World Wars, from UN peacekeeping efforts to the use of propaganda in Nazi Germany. The exhibitions offered great depth into major events of the 20th century, showing both military and civilian perspectives on war, and following the heroic work of civilians during WW1 and WW2. A memorable experience for many was the ability to talk to a D-day veteran, which offered the true beliefs and experiences soldiers had landing on Juno Beach and fighting at the Battle of the Bulge. Overall it was an enriching experience that offered the ability to learn outside the classroom and learn something new. Our thanks go to Ms O'Neil, Mr Reynolds, Ms Roberts-Gawen and all of the other teachers attending.

The Making of Potter



On the 30th November and 7th December a total of 107 Year 8 students travelled to London for a tour around the Warner Bros. Studios. They toured the sets of Harry Potter and attended workshops on the making of the movies, as well as screenwriting classes. These techniques will prove invaluable for the students in their own creative writing and helped elevate their understanding of fictional works. We interviewed a few Year 8 students to discover what they took away from the trip:

'I feel like I learned a lot. It was a great experience in general' - Gagan-Veer Singh.

'I really enjoyed walking through the Forbidden Forest and seeing all the different magical creatures found in Harry Potter' - Alexander Stanaway.

'All the different sets and props were really interesting' - Edward Sherlock
'The whole trip was amazing. It was very interactive and I found that it is brilliant for fans of the series' - Taran Chana

The students wanted to take a chance to thank all the staff members involved in organising the trip and ensuring it was an enjoyable experience for everyone. For any current Year 7s interested in going on this incredible trip it will be running again in 2018.

The QM Observer

Sport

Rugby

1st XV – Oliver Mills: An early win against Birmingham Met with an untried team showed the potential this 1st XV had. The core of experienced first team players from the previous season (Oliver Mills, Tom Dawson, Will Samy, Sam Garbett and Ross Beale) supported the younger players. All members within the team began to develop as a unit. Fixtures against KES and King Edward's Lichfield started to show dividends. Scrum half Joel Pepper and No8 Rohit Suglani have given the team real structure and a dangerous attacking threat. QM dominated the game against King Edward's Lichfield and are now through to the final of the Plate competition.



U15A XV – Johannes Christoffersen: The team always puts in one hundred percent effort, pushing their opponents to the final whistle — a credit to every player that has represented this team. The main area we have improved upon is team play plus being able to take into consideration the individual strengths and weaknesses of each player. A return next term will see training continue as we are still in the Staffordshire Cup.

U14A XV (below) – Matthew Smith: We started the season with a win against KES Birmingham, The Royal School, Camp Hill and Walsall Academy. We now look forward to our Staffordshire Cup Quarter Final. Top points scorers for the team are J Clarke and R Bailey.



U13A XIII – Joseph Dickson: The highlight of the season was winning the Staffordshire U13 Festival to become County Champions (photo below), and being the only team not to lose any games in the tournament. Another feature of our play has been the tremendous effort we have put into training and every match. On behalf of all the players, I would like to thank Mr G Taylor for all the hard work, patience and time he has given up to make us the team we are.

U12A XII – Daniel Alden-Joseph: Always a tough start to a season when many of the players have never played a full-contact rugby game before but the first games showed promise. It was not long before victories were recorded v Derby GS, Aldridge and KE Camp Hill. The improvement in ability, performance, confidence and understanding that has been made is evident, and that has been down to the enthusiasm and attendance at training. The season thus far reads 3 wins, 2 losses and 1 draw.



Athletics

Mr Taylor: Zac Elliott generously donated his first international athletics shirt to the School, which has been framed for display in the Sports Hall.



Futsal

Mr Gibbons: The Y7s (left) have achieved 4-3 and 15-0 victories against Hydesville and Brownhills respectively. The Y8/Y9s have displayed a determined attitude against Hydesville (7-3) and Four Dwellings Academy (11-7). Round-robin tournaments have finished with Y7 teams 1st and 2nd and the Y8/Y9 teams 2nd and 5th. Top scorers for each team so far are: Sam Wilson 7 (Y7) and Reni Panayiotou-McGihon 9 (Y8/9).

Hockey

Mr Francis: The 1st X1 have played 10, with excellent 6-0 wins against both Camp Hill and Derby Grammar. Sef Huyskens has scored 17 goals so far, and has his sights firmly set on the 1st team record of 39 goals in a season. Goalkeepers Sukhvir Athwal and Kharam Auluk are proving to be excellent between the posts.

Girls' Sport

Gurneer Flora: The beginning of the new year had seen a great variety in games options for girls, with Mrs Mehta introducing Bouldering sessions and a new rota, which allows the usage of the Fitness suit, pool, Sports hall, and both the MPA and CPA. Alongside these new additions, Mrs Chapman has continued her non-competitive sessions with numerous activities, all proving to be enjoyable. Leading staff are also looking for volunteers to join the "Girls' Leadership and Marketing Squad" (GLAMS) Team. Overall, a positive start to the year!

Editorial Team Editor: Ms Roberts-Gawen; Sub-Editors: Glen Foster, Vincent Jordan, Ethan Moore, Pavandeep Josan